

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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30 Day Notice Letter to Retroactive HAVA Check Undeliverables Frequently Asked Questions October 8, 2010

Who received this letter?

This letter was sent to voters who meet all of the following criteria:

- The voter was sent a DMV Ping Letter as part of the Retroactive HAVA Check project and the letter was returned to G.A.B. offices as undeliverable.
- The voter is still active and registered at the same address the letter was mailed to.
- The voter is not a Military or Overseas elector.
- The voter did not return an absentee ballot for the September 14 Partisan Primary.

How many letters were sent?

12,780 voters were mailed a letter

When were the letters mailed?

The letters were mailed on October 7, 2010

What does the letter say?

The letter notifies the voter that G.A.B. has reliable information that the voter no longer resides at the address where they are currently registered, because a mailing to that address was returned as undeliverable. The letter asks the voter to respond within 30 days if they want to continue their registration at that address. A postage-paid return envelope is included with the letter for the voter to respond. If the voter has changed their name or address, they are directed to re-register with their local municipal clerk.

What happens to the voters who do not respond?

Voters who do not respond in writing within 30 days will be marked as inactive. Voters whose 30 day notice letter is returned as undeliverable will be marked inactive immediately as they are returned. We do not have to wait until the 30 days are up to inactivate voters whose mail is returned as undeliverable. Voters marked as inactive will not appear on the poll lists and will be required to reregister again before voting.

What is the timeline for this process?

The letters were mailed on October 7, 2010. Voters whose 30 Day Notice letter is returned as undeliverable will be marked inactive in SVRS immediately. Voters who respond to the letter and request continuation of registration at their current address will be marked in SVRS accordingly when they respond. After November 7, 2010, voters who did not respond to the letter will be marked inactive in SVRS.

Why were these voters mailed a letter?

These voters were mailed a DMV Ping Letter as part of the Retroactive HAVA Check project, and that letter was returned by the post office as undeliverable. An undeliverable mailing constitutes reliable information that a voter may no longer reside at the address where they are currently registered to vote. Sec. 6.50(3) Wis. Stats. outlines the process to be followed if an election official has such reliable information.

Why did G.A.B. mail the letters?

Government Accountability Board staff mailed the letters to the voters rather than requiring municipal clerks to do so in order to achieve consistency and in order to lessen the cost of printing and postage. This was done to ensure that all appropriate voters were sent a letter and were treated uniformly, regardless of the municipality in which they are registered to vote. Board staff also wanted to avoid giving additional workload and related expense to clerks who are already working hard in preparation for the November 2 General Election.

Did G.A.B. mail letters for all municipalities?

Board staff mailed letters on behalf of all municipalities who had voters eligible for the mailing, except the City of Milwaukee. The City of Milwaukee Election Commission independently ordered Election Commission staff to mail 30 day notice letters to those voters whose DMV Ping Letter was returned as undeliverable before G.A.B. had made the decision to send letters on behalf of municipal clerks. However, the Milwaukee mailing was done in close consultation with Board staff.

What should clerks do if one of these voters contacts them?

If a voter contacts a municipal or county clerk, the clerk should verify if the voter still resides at the same address that appears on the letter. If so, the clerk should direct the voter to sign and return the continuation of registration form to G.A.B. The clerk can also process the form themselves if they would like to. To process the form, the clerk would change the voter's status in SVRS back to Active – Registered, and file the signed continuation of registration form with the voter's registration record.

If the voter no longer resides at that address or if they have changed their name, the clerk should have the voter fill out a new voter registration application and process it as they would any normal registration.

Clerks can also contact the G.A.B. Help Desk at gabhhelpdesk@wi.gov for further assistance.